

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE DR. CAROLYN HUNTOON
CONFIRMATION TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
MAY 4, 1999

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Senator Levin and other Members of the Committee. It is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management. I am honored by the President's and Secretary Richardson's confidence in me and would like to thank them both for their support. If confirmed, I look forward to serving at the Department of Energy under Secretary Richardson's able leadership and working with the Members of this Committee.

I also would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and your staff, for moving forward expeditiously with my nomination. I have appreciated the opportunity to meet with some of you and your staff to discuss the issues facing this enormously challenging program and I look forward to meeting with other Members of the Committee.

Dealing with the environmental legacy of the Cold War is one of the most difficult tasks facing this country. The formidable job of cleaning up thousands of tons of nuclear waste is one of the most technically and managerially complex problems in this country. Like the space program, much of this territory is uncharted and demands creative solutions to unique problems.

I see my job as leading the Department's environmental management program in a way that enjoys the confidence of the Congress, the states, the Tribes, and our citizens. The principles that will

guide me are straightforward:

First, we must have clear goals. This is a basic tenet of good management and the Government Performance and Results Act enacted by Congress. I fully support the Department's goals of:

- addressing urgent risks first;
- ensuring that we conduct our work in a manner that is protective of our workers, the public and the environment;
- reducing program costs;
- maintaining compliance; and
- completing as much cleanup as possible by 2006.

Second, to achieve these goals, we must implement good project management. With more than 350 projects of the size, scope, and complexity of those facing the Environmental Management program, it is critical that we clearly define -- from the outset -- what we are trying to accomplish, when and how we are going to accomplish it, and at what cost. In addition, we need a process that inculcates safety into daily operations and can reduce the inevitable uncertainties and risks that are factors in all programs and projects. We will need to:

- establish solid cost and schedule project baselines that maintain safety;
- implement the best project management practices of the public and private sectors;
- institute systems to allow early detection of problems and timely corrective action;

- make effective use of independent reviews and project control boards, ensuring strong follow through on their recommendations;
- provide strong incentives for good performance and hold ourselves and our contractors accountable for that performance.

In short, we need to use practices that ensure we are getting the most for the taxpayers= dollar.

As I learned at NASA, these mechanisms are essential for reducing costs, improving operational and safety performance, and maintaining accountability.

But the best processes and procedures are not enough to get the job done. We must have effective project managers in both our Federal and contractor staff. We must have a work environment that encourages employees to surface issues, concerns, and ideas for doing business more effectively and know that their issues and ideas will get a fair hearing. We need closer coordination between headquarters and the field. I know from having managed a field center and from working in Washington, the importance of both perspectives for the program. Therefore, one of my priorities, if confirmed, will be to gain a better first-hand understanding of the sites and establish a good working relationship with them.

Third, we need to bring the best scientific and technological information and expertise to bear to solve our problems. This science and technology must be focused on the major obstacles to achieving progress. It is clear that in several areas, such as mixed- and high-level radioactive waste, we will need technological breakthroughs in order to get the job done, to improve system productivity, and to reduce the costs of many of the projects. We must use the considerable

technological talent and resources of the Department and its laboratories in partnership with those of the private sector to better link research with ~~non~~-the-ground@cleanup needs.

Finally, we must ensure that the Congress, the local communities, the Tribes, the states, and interested institutions, individuals, and citizen groups are involved in the process from beginning to end. We need open lines of communication to ensure that we have a common understanding of issues as they arise and the hard choices that may need to be made. This is important for building public confidence that the Department will fulfill its responsibilities at all its sites. We need to move promptly to work with workers and communities at all our sites to help ensure smooth transitions as missions change. This is particularly important for closing sites such as Rocky Flats, Fernald and Mound. If confirmed, one of my priorities will be to meet with stakeholders regularly to ensure that we receive their input as we grapple with the tough issues facing the program.

I fully recognize the difficulty of the many challenges ahead if I am confirmed. But I think I bring a number of important skills to the job.

-- As Director of the Johnson Space Center, I managed an organization with similarities to the Environmental Management program -- an organization with approximately 15,000 Federal and contractor employees; a large reliance on contractor employees to fulfill its mission; a unique and technically complex program; and an organization that needed good project management skills.

-- As a scientist and a manager in a multi-discipline program, I know first hand the value

of independent technical reviews and the importance of including all of the key parties to a decision in a way that is open, honest and fair.

-- As someone who has built and managed a laboratory from the ground up, I know the importance of integrating technology into the program mission to solve problems.

-- As a manager of both international and domestic programs, I fully appreciate how to negotiate and work cooperatively with other entities to achieve acceptable outcomes for all involved.

-- As someone who has been in government for thirty years, I have learned not only how to manage in times of growing budgets, but more importantly, how to manage as budgets tighten.

-- As someone responsible for the safety of our astronauts in space, I understand how imperative it is to create and maintain a culture that views safety of the workers and the public as its first and foremost mission.

B As a manager of biomedical and life sciences, I fully appreciate the hazards posed by chemicals as well as the need to determine the risk they pose and the means to mitigate those risks.

I believe the Department can effectively address its cleanup responsibilities. My commitment to you, if confirmed, is to evaluate what needs to be done and to work to find more effective ways to do it. If confirmed, with your help Mr. Chairman, and the help of the Members of this Committee, I believe we can make significant progress.

Mr. Chairman and other Members of the Committee, let me say again, it is an honor to be nominated for this position and to be considered by the Members of this Committee. I will be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.

RESPONSES TO SASC QUESTIONS FOR DR. CAROLYN HUNTOON

Management

Q1. If confirmed, what are your plans for reorganizing the Office of Environmental Management (EM)?

A1. The Office of Environmental Management went through a significant downsizing at Headquarters about two years ago and needs to deal with the effects of that downsizing. My goals for the EM organization are to enhance project management; ensure accountability of managers both at headquarters and in the field; develop clear, effective field/headquarters relationships; institute systems to allow early detection of problems and timely corrective action; facilitate cleanup and closure in the field; and promote good relationships with Congress, regulators, and stakeholders. My plan would be to work with the many talented staff in the current organization and to consult with the EM field managers to develop a reorganization plan as necessary to accomplish these goals. Additionally, my plans would address Secretary Richardson's April 21 changes to the Departmental management structure and "Workforce 21" needs. If confirmed, this will be one of my highest priorities.

Q2. What are your views on the roles and responsibilities of Environmental Management field managers relative to those of Environmental Management Headquarters managers? Do you favor more delegation of authority to field managers or less?

A2. My experience as a former field manager at NASA and in Washington cause me to fully appreciate the importance of both perspectives for a successful program. I fully support the Secretary's position expressed in his April 21 memorandum on Departmental management structure changes that field office managers should report directly to the Assistant Secretary with programmatic responsibility for the site. This is key to establishing proper accountability within the program. I view the field managers as responsible for ~~non-the-ground~~ program and project execution; headquarters role is to provide overall direction to the program and ensure that field management is consistent with that direction. If confirmed, one of my first priorities will be to gain a better understanding of the sites and work to establish a good working relationship with each one.

Q3. What is your view of the recent reorganization of the field office reporting structure?

A3. I support the Secretary's recent reorganization of the field office reporting structure. I believe that this reporting structure will allow the Department to manage more effectively and improve accountability.

Q4. What is your view of the value of performance based contracting?

A4. The Department needs to use contracting strategies that facilitate cleanup and produce the best and most cost-effective results for the taxpayers. I believe that it is important to assess each situation and determine what the best contracting strategy may be given those circumstances. I believe that performance-based contracting can be very useful and should be used as much as possible in situations where it is appropriate. Essentially, performance-based contracting is managing for results -- incentives for good performance and penalties for failure to perform. Using this approach, the government should realize improved contractor performance and greater accountability, as well as more efficient deployment of contractor management and government oversight resources.

Q5. Do you believe that current Environmental Management contracting approaches significantly inhibit program innovation, decrease project efficiency, slow cleanup and closure progress, or retard the broad application of innovative technologies? Please explain.

A5. I understand that over the past several years as part of its overall contract reform effort, EM has significantly increased the use of performance-based contracts. Although there were some implementation problems initially, I understand these problems are being addressed and the Department is beginning to see very positive results from its efforts. I have been told that the increased use of performance-based contracts has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the EM program. For example, the performance-based incentives in the Rocky Flats contract resulted in innovation that produced an overwhelming increase in decontamination of glove boxes from three a year in 1995 to three a week in 1999. This type of positive incentive should help the Department achieve its goals of accelerating cleanup and closure of sites.

Q6. Given your apparent lack of experience with large environmental cleanup programs, how will you go about addressing the management challenges facing the Office of Environmental Management?

A6. The Environmental Management program is a large, technically complex program that is significantly broader than cleanup. I believe that my experience at NASA focused on the same types of management activities and challenges that confront the Environmental Management program. Specifically, both programs involve the need to effectively lead a large workforce; apply disciplined cost and schedule management practices to large technical and construction projects; identify science and technology-development needs; ensure compliance with applicable environmental and worker safety requirements; and apply risk-based principles to the prioritization of work. My experience with NASA is relevant to these issues. I expect to apply this experience to the EM program's challenges. My goals for the EM organization are to enhance project management; ensure accountability of managers both at headquarters and in the field; develop clear, effective field/headquarters relationships; institute systems to allow early detection of problems and timely corrective action; facilitate cleanup and closure in the field; and promote good relationships with Congress, regulators, and stakeholders.

Savannah River Canyons

Q7. What is your view on the need to continue operation of the two materials processing canyons located at the Savannah River Site?

A7. The Savannah River Site Canyon facilities are important for stabilizing nuclear materials and certain spent fuel to address potential health and safety vulnerabilities. The approaches and schedules for stabilizing these materials were identified in the Department's February 28, 1995 Implementation Plan in response to Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Recommendation 94-1 and in Revision 1 of the Implementation Plan, dated December 28, 1998.

Q8. Do you support maintaining funds to fully operate these canyons in order to meet programmatic and Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board requirements?

A8. If confirmed, I would continue to support funding for these stabilization activities to meet the Department's programmatic and DNFSB requirements.

Q9. To your knowledge, has the Department conducted any assessments to determine which spent fuel types being stored at or expected to be shipped to the Savannah River Site might be at risk of deterioration over the next 10 to 15 years? If not, do you believe such assessment would be useful?

A9. It is my understanding that the Department conducted an assessment of the condition of its

spent nuclear fuel and storage facilities in the DOE complex about six years ago. I have been told that both that report and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (in its Recommendation 94-1) expressed concern about deteriorated spent fuel at the Savannah River Site. Consequently, to address health and safety concerns posed by this material, the Department embarked upon a campaign to stabilize a portion of this spent fuel using the canyons at the Savannah River Site. The Department is currently preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the remaining spent nuclear fuel at the Savannah River Site as well as the spent fuel the site expects to receive in the future to determine whether it poses or will pose any health and safety vulnerabilities. I am told that the Department is currently evaluating its options for addressing this material and plans to make a decision in June on the appropriate way to handle it.

- Q10. If you learned that a specific fuel type was likely to deteriorate significantly within the next 10 years, would you recommend processing and stabilization that fuel today rather than continuing to store it until an alternative stabilization technology was available?**

A10. If faced with a situation where a specific fuel type were significantly deteriorating, I would take whatever action was necessary and cost effective to address safety and health hazards.

My understanding is that the Department's current policy is that if a situation arises in which a specific fuel type were significantly deteriorating to the point where it became a health and safety concern, it would be processed in the canyons. I support this policy. I also understand that the Department has made good use of the expertise of the staff at the Savannah River Technical Center in researching and developing new technologies to stabilize spent fuel and other nuclear materials and that these efforts have been successful. My goal, if confirmed, would be to ensure that situations that pose a significant health and safety risk are dealt with in a timely manner to protect the Department's workers and the public.

Environmental Management Technology Development

Q11. Can you give us your reviews on the importance of a vigorous, national technology development effort within Environmental Management?

Q12. Do you believe that Environmental Management can effectively meet its proposed cleanup and closure goals without a viable Environmental Management technology development program?

A11/12.

I believe that maintaining a high quality, well-balanced technology program is critical to achieving the near-and longer-term goals of the Department. The Department is facing many technically complex problems that currently lack adequate solutions. I understand that an assessment done by the Department last year revealed a large number of environmental problems that require technology solutions in order to complete cleanup activities. Many of these environmental problems stand in the critical path to site closure, and many are highly complex and currently intractable, such as high level waste. These types of issues require the type of scientific understanding that comes from longer-term research. Without an investment in this technological research, meeting the Department's cleanup and closure goals will be extremely difficult if not impossible.

Q13. Can you give us your views on the effectiveness of the Environmental Management Technology Development program and its current management? Specifically, do you feel that this program has been effective in transferring cutting-edge research to DOE clean-up and waste management sites?

A13. I understand that the Science and Technology program has taken major steps in the past 18 months under its new management to more closely link this program to EM cleanup projects to ensure that new technologies in which the Department has invested are available at all relevant sites and used to reduce risks, costs and schedules.

I agree with the program's new focus on trying to ensure that its science and technology

activities are responsive to "on-the-ground" needs identified in the field and that users have an effective role in all aspects of technology decision-making from planning through deployment. I understand that the Department is beginning to see the payoffs from its focus on deploying new technologies in which it invested. I am told that use of new technology has dramatically increased over the past two years. As EM moves forward with cleanup of the more intractable and costly problems, I believe our reliance on solid science and technology investments will increase. If confirmed, I will support this program and work to eliminate barriers to deploying new technologies across the complex.

Low Level Waste Disposal

Q14. What are your views on the use of commercial disposal options for DOE-origin low level radioactive waste?

A14. The Department recently completed a policy analysis on the use of commercial facilities to dispose of low-level and mixed low-level waste. As a result of that analysis, the Department decided to maintain its current policy on the use of commercial disposal facilities. I agree that if there are viable, permitted and licensed commercial low-level waste disposal facilities, the Department should consider these facilities as it makes its disposal decisions to determine if they will be more cost effective than other available options.

Q15. Do you support increased competition for low level waste disposal contracts?

A15. There are steps the Department can take to promote competition in this area. Additional competition could produce lower costs for the Department and the taxpayer. Particularly, in these tight budget times it is important that the Department and its contractors seek the lowest cost disposal options for its waste.

Q16. Do you believe the current policy encourages DOE facility contractors to seek the lowest cost option, even if that option is utilization of a commercial disposal facility?

A16. I believe that the current policy does encourage DOE facility contractors to seek cost effective waste disposal, including considering using permitted and licensed commercial low level waste disposal facilities.

Environmental Management at Rocky Flats

Q17. What three things will you do that you believe will move Rocky Flats closer to a 2006 closure?

A17. I strongly share your desire to close Rocky Flats by 2006. I recognize that this is a very ambitious schedule and will require vigilant management by all parties if we are to achieve this goal first. First, to achieve this goal, the Department, with Congressional support,

must first ensure continued sufficient funding for Rocky Flats. Secondly, the Department must be able to ship transuranic waste timely to WIPP to avoid redirecting resources to on-site waste storage that could delay closure. Third, the Department must be able to move plutonium off-site. Moving plutonium off-site will require working aggressively within the Department to make receiver sites available for Rocky Flats special nuclear material. Moving this material off-site is critical to completing deactivation of plutonium facilities. Additionally, the Department must identify a disposition path for low-level mixed waste. I understand that the Department is pursuing different alternatives to find a cost-effective, timely solution for these wastes.

Q18. Among federal agencies there is a Rocky Flats coordinating group that meets regularly. It would be helpful to have senior DOE policy official such as yourself attend those meetings on behalf of DOE.

If confirmed, will you attend?

If confirmed, I will, of course, participate fully in this important forum. This group provides an important mechanism to facilitate identification and resolution of issues within the Department that might otherwise impede closure activities. I will use this and any other means available to work to help the Department achieve its closure goals for Rocky Flats.

Q19. What impact has the delayed opening of Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) had at Rocky Flats?

A19. The impact of the delayed opening of WIPP has been that Rocky Flats has had to evaluate the potential need to provide further alternative long-term storage for its transuranic (TRU) waste if sufficient shipments to WIPP are not made in the near future. However, the Department's successful opening of WIPP may mean that long-term interim storage may not be required. Furthermore, on March 24, the Environmental Protection Agency certified several waste streams at Rocky Flats for WIPP disposal. Due to this progress, the

Department is optimistic that it will be able to ship waste from Rocky Flats to WIPP without affecting the plans to close Rocky Flats by 2006 or requiring the construction of long-term storage facilities at the site.

Nevertheless, as a contingency, DOE is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the alternatives for additional storage of TRU waste at Rocky Flats if there are delays in shipments to WIPP. The alternatives being evaluated include modification of existing facilities or construction of new facilities.

Q20. Has on-site storage added costs at Rocky Flats? If so, what impact will those costs have on reaching a 2006 closure date?

A20. I have been informed that storing TRU waste on-site has not yet involved costs that would impact the Department's plans to close Rocky Flats by 2006. However, if Rocky Flats cannot ship to WIPP and additional storage is needed, preliminary estimates show that modification of an existing facility would cost \$6-7 million, or construction of a new facility would cost no more than about \$22 million. At this time, however, I understand that DOE has confidence that Rocky Flats can ship to WIPP at a rate that will prevent the need for additional storage.

Q21. Please, in detail, identify any additional scope changes that are not in the Project Baseline Summary?

A21. In late February 1999, the Rocky Flats prime contractor Kaiser-Hill Inc. gave an informal presentation to Congress updating the Rocky Flats Closure Project. In this briefing, the contractor identified additional scope and cost changes of \$65 million for FY 1999 through FY 2000. I understand that contractor and the Department do not fully agree on these cost and scope changes and are in the process of negotiating this issue.

Q22. Can WIPP begin to accept non-mixed waste without approval from the State of New Mexico?

A22. I have been informed that Judge Penn's decision that WIPP has interim status allows the Department to ship both non-mixed and mixed transuranic waste to WIPP prior to its receipt of a RCRA permit. It was my understanding that the Department has not made any decisions regarding whether it will ship mixed waste to WIPP at this time. It has begun shipments of non-mixed waste to WIPP, and intends to continue these shipments.

Experience and Qualifications

Your credentials suggest that you have an academic background in physiology and professional experience in science and technology. As I'm sure you know, the Department of Energy Environmental Management program involves diverse and complicated environmental, safety and health issues.

Q23. What in your personal or professional background might qualify you for the position of Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management?

A23. I fully recognize the difficulty of the many challenges ahead if I am confirmed. But I think I bring a number of important skills to the job.

-- As Director of the Johnson Space Center, I managed an organization with similarities to the Environmental Management program -- an organization with approximately 15,000 Federal and contractor employees; a large reliance on contractor employees to fulfill its mission; a unique and technically complex program; and an organization that needed good project management skills.

-- As a scientist and a manager in a multi-discipline program, I know first hand the value of independent technical reviews and the importance of including all of the key parties to a decision in a way that is open, honest and fair.

-- As someone who has built and managed a laboratory from the ground up, I know the importance of integrating technology into the program mission to solve problems.

-- As a manager of both international and domestic programs, I fully appreciate how to negotiate and work cooperatively with other entities to achieve acceptable outcomes for all involved.

-- As someone who has been in government for thirty years, I have learned not only how to manage in times of growing budgets, but more importantly, how to manage as budgets tighten.

-- As someone responsible for the safety of our astronauts in space, I understand how imperative it is to create and maintain a culture that views safety of the workers and the public as its first and foremost mission.

B As a manager of biomedical and life sciences, I fully appreciate the hazards posed by chemicals as well as the need to determine the risk they pose and the means to mitigate those risks.

I believe the Department can effectively address its cleanup responsibilities. My commitment, if confirmed, is to evaluate what needs to be done and to work to find more effective ways to do it.

Q24. Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the new Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management?

A24. To fully understand the challenges confronting the Environmental Management program, if confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to visit the sites. I want to hear and see, first hand, the sites' accomplishments and challenges. I would also undertake a series of focused project management reviews to learn what is working well and what issues will require immediate attention and action.

Federal Sovereign Immunity

During the 105th Congress the Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Control, and Risk Assessment of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing to markup the Superfund Reauthorization bill (S.8). As a result of a markup amendment offered by Senators Wyden and Allard, the bill included a complete waiver of federal sovereign immunity, which would require federal facilities to comply with state and local substantive and procedural requirements, potentially resulting in the disruption and reevaluation of existing cleanup investments and schedules.

Q25. What is your view on the proposed expansion of the state and local role at federal cleanup sites?

A25. I fully support the principle that Federal agencies should be required to comply with all environmental laws and requirements and should be treated the same under the law as private parties. My understanding is that under current Superfund law a federal facility cleanup must comply with State and local requirements just as any private party cleanup under CERCLA would.

I am committed to getting on with the cleanup at the Department's sites. I believe that the States, local governments and the public need to be meaningfully involved in the Department's cleanup decisions. If confirmed, I will continue the involvement of the states and other stakeholders in these decision-making processes.

My goal is for the Department to achieve cleanup and closure of its sites as expeditiously as possible and in full compliance with the law. I would, however, be concerned with any changes to the law that might interfere with cleanup progress or increase costs.

Q26. How would you propose to influence the Department's position and policy regarding a complete waiver of sovereign immunity under Superfund Reauthorization?

A26. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, I would work to ensure that the cleanups we undertake comply fully with the requirements of Superfund and with state and local requirements as required by the law. I would also ensure the full involvement of the States in our cleanups so that their requirements and concerns are addressed. Should Congress determine an amendment to the existing waiver of sovereign immunity is needed, I will work with the Congress to help achieve both their goals and the Department's.

Applicability of Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) Regulations

In May 1993, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary made a public commitment to replace the Department's self-regulation of worker health and safety with external regulation under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970. Historically, the courts have held that the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, which provides authority to the Department, as well as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, supersedes comparable OSHA regulations. Moreover, to avoid duplication of regulatory functions, Congress adopted an exemption to OSHA under section 4(b)(1), which applies to most worker health and safety issues at the Department's government-owned, contractor operated facilities.

Q27. What is the status of the Department's shift toward external regulatory oversight under OSHA?

A27. In February, Secretary Richardson indicated that, based on the information and analysis of data available from the joint Nuclear Regulatory Commission/DOE pilot projects, the Department would not pursue additional external-regulation pilots at DOE nuclear facilities in the near future. At the same time, the Secretary indicated the need to evaluate the issues identified in the pilots, and left the door open to explore the possibility of a greater role for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in working with the Department to protect worker safety and health. I understand that the Department has had recent discussions with OSHA on options for improving compliance with worker and health standards, including training and joint performance evaluations.

Q28. If confirmed, as Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management, what goals would you identify in relation to the shift toward external regulation?

A28. I share the Secretary's view that initiating more external-regulation pilots at this time will not help to clarify or resolve outstanding issues -- and that there is need to evaluate

whether the substantial funds required to prepare DOE facilities for a shift to external regulation would be better spent on achieving the Department's cleanup and mission goals.

If confirmed, my goal would be to redouble the Environmental Management program's efforts to provide a safe and healthy workplace, protect the communities near our facilities, and build credibility with the public. The draft pilot project reports indicate that DOE's standards, technical competency, and operations are sound from a safety standpoint. I believe the Environmental Management program now needs to promote compliance with those requirements and, where deficiencies exist, ensure that managers are held accountable and corrective actions are taken on a timely basis.

Q29. What experience have you had with such issues?

A29. As Director of the Johnson Space Center, worker safety and health was my highest priority. In addition to following internal safety management processes and procedures, we also complied with and were subject to regulation and inspection by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. I am proud of the fact that during my tenure as Director, we safely and successfully launched 13 manned space flights. I undertook a complete evaluation of the Center's institutional safety and instituted a number of safety initiatives that applied to both the contractor and federal workforces. These efforts lead to a renewed awareness of each employee's responsibility for safety priorities. This work to promote a safety first culture throughout all levels of the federal and contractor organizations caused a culture change that has poised the Center to be one of the first government entities to be designated as an OSHA Voluntary Protection Program member.

Q30. There have been a number of worker health and safety issues throughout Department of Energy complex from 1995 to 1998:

- (1) July 1997, high levels of worker radiation exposure, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, California;
- (2) May 1997, an explosion that caused significant damage and radioactive releases, Hanford Site, Washington;
- (3) January 1996-1998, programmatic problems with radiological controls, Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site, Colorado;
- (4) October 1997, falsified reactor safety records at the Advanced Test Reactor Critical Facility, Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, Idaho.
- (5) November 1996, an explosion occurred in the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Facility that could have resulted in serious or fatal injuries, Los Alamos

National Laboratory New Mexico;

- (6) 1995, the contractor failed to report significant radiation exposure of several workers, Oak Ridge National Laboratory Tennessee; and
- (7) 1995-1997, the contractor failed for more than two years to properly monitor 250 employees potentially exposed to radiation, Savannah River Site, South Carolina.

How would you propose to examine and then address what appears to be a wide ranging, complex worker health and safety problems within the Department of Energy complex?

A30. Although I am not familiar with the examples you cite, I believe that recent incidents at DOE sites highlight the need to ensure that the EM program institutes a strong safety culture that permeates all levels of the field, headquarters, and contractor organizations. As Director of the Johnson Space Center, safety was my paramount concern. I undertook a complete evaluation of the Center's institutional safety practices, implemented a number of safety initiatives, and worked to ensure that a culture existed where safety was every employee's first and foremost responsibility.

The Secretary has made it clear to me and everyone in the Department that he will do all he can to prevent serious safety mishaps in the future, and that the key to this success is accountability. I share this view and his commitment to improving the Department's safety record. If confirmed, I will do all I can to improve safety performance across the complex and to take the necessary steps to ensure that safety issues are promptly identified and resolved.

Clean-up Standards

Q31. How do you intend to work with communities, states and the Environmental Protection Agency to establish clean-up standards to enable DOE to close sites?

A31. A key factor for successfully completing cleanup efforts and closing sites is open communication among all interested parties to ensure that we have a common understanding of issues, potential solutions, priorities, and the hard choices that may need to be made. I want to ensure that Congress, the regulators, other stakeholders, and the Site Specific Advisory Boards have the opportunity to be engaged regularly throughout the Department's decision-making process. I believe that this kind of open, regular communication is important to developing the credibility necessary to resolve difficult issues in a lasting manner. I understand that early and effective stakeholder involvement in the cleanup decision-making process at Fernald demonstrates this point. The product of that involvement was a common vision for the site's end state that has resulted in large cost savings and has helped to accelerate site closure.

Q32. What role do you believe DOE should have in this process?

A32. I believe that DOE, working in partnership with all of its stakeholders, is responsible for initiating and maintaining open lines of communication, developing technical analyses and solutions, evaluating the costs of alternatives, and for implementing cleanup decisions.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

Q33. Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?

A33. I do.

Q34. Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the Administration in power?

A34. I do.

Q35. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management?

A35. I do.

Q36. Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

A36. I do.